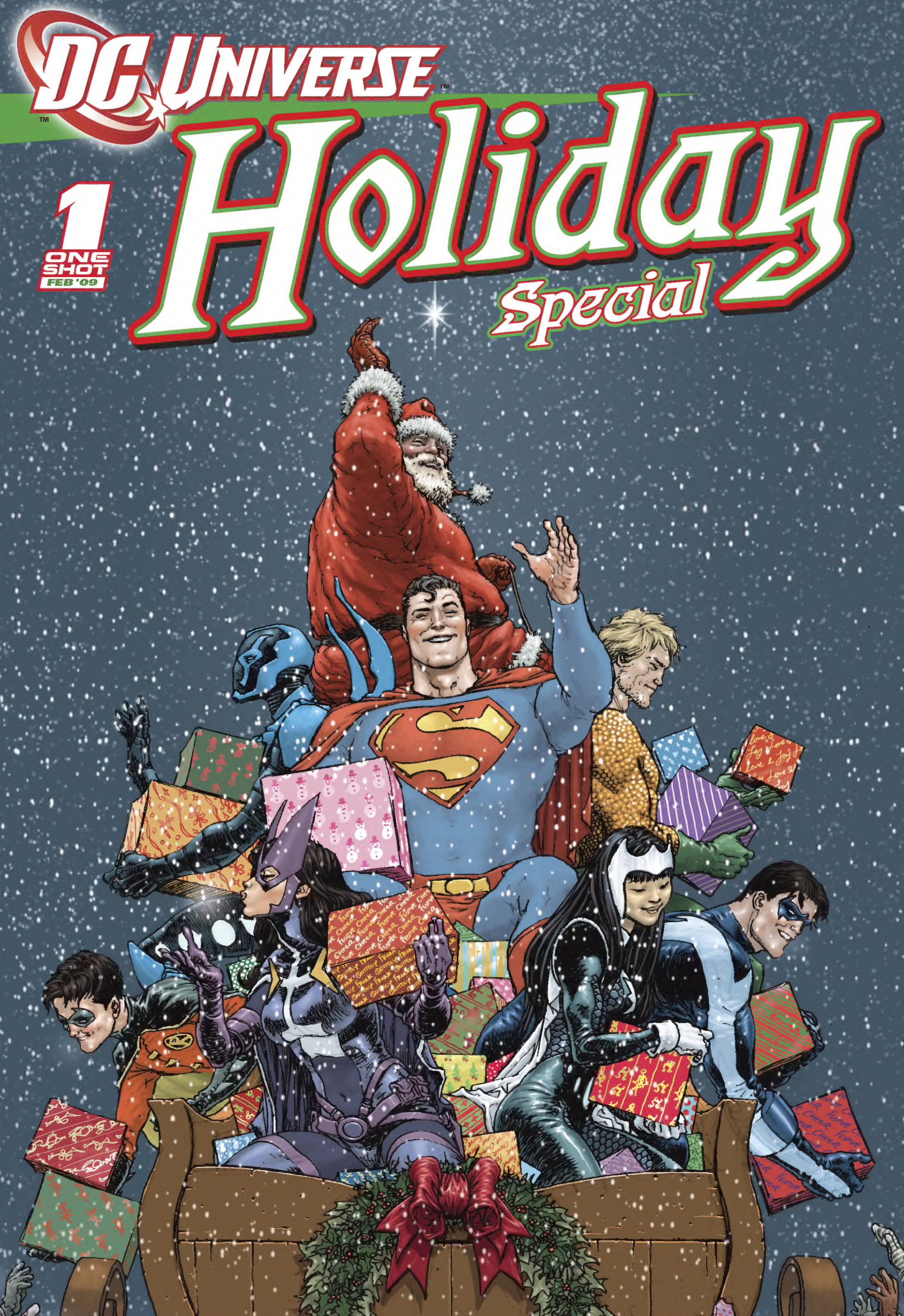
DC UNIVERSE™

1 ONE SHOT FEB '09

Holiday Special



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SEASON'S GREETINGS

writer: STERLING GATES
art: KARL KERSCHL
color: PETE PANTAZIS
letters: TRAVIS LANHAM

From our SUPERMAN family to yours!

DC UNIVERSE HOLIDAY SPECIAL '08

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MOST PEOPLE CAN ONLY IMAGINE WHERE I CAME FROM.

AFTER ALL, I'M A CHARACTER, RIGHT? A GUY THEY READ ABOUT IN BOOKS AND COLORFUL STORIES.

IF THEY'RE LUCKY, MAYBE THEY BRAG TO THEIR FRIENDS OR FAMILY THAT THEY CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF ME.

BEFORE I FLY AWAY TO THE NEXT PLACE THAT NEEDS ME.

THEY PROBABLY THINK OF MY PARENTS AS CHARACTERS, TOO. WISE AND STRONG, SURELY. MOTHER AND FATHER TO THE COSTUMED HERO THEY KNOW TODAY.

BUT THEY DON'T KNOW THEIR PAIN.

HOW COULD THEY?

AFTER ALL, THEY WEREN'T THERE. LIKE THE MILLIONS OF US WHO WERE. ON THAT DAY...

THE DAY MY PLANET DIED.

THE DAY I LEFT EVERYTHING BEHIND.

LIKE I SAID, PEOPLE CAN ONLY IMAGINE.

BUT THINGS WERE DIFFERENT.

The Man in Red

THINGS WERE WORSE.

Matt Cherniss & Peter Johnson writers • Ivan Reis & Joe Prado artists
Rod Reis colors • Rob Leigh letters

EVERYONE KNOWS THAT I CAME FROM ELSEWHERE BEFORE FINDING MY NEW HOME HERE.

EVEN IF THEY DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHO RAISED ME TO BE THIS WAY. AFTER ALL, WHAT I DO IS PRETTY UNIQUE.

SO WHAT'S DIFFERENT FROM THE WAY PEOPLE THINK IT HAPPENED? THE WAY THEY'VE BEEN TAUGHT SINCE THEY WERE KIDS?

SOMETIMES IT'S IN THE DETAILS.

BUT IT STARTS, AS THESE STORIES DO, WITH A BABY.

AND A MAN AND HIS WIFE, WHO NEEDED TO BECOME A FAMILY.

MY FAMILY. AT LEAST FOR MANY YEARS.

AS THE YEARS WENT BY, I DISCOVERED I COULD DO THINGS.

SPECIAL THINGS.

YOU LEARN NEW THINGS ABOUT THE WORLD WHEN YOUR PERSPECTIVE CHANGES. WHEN YOU'RE ABLE TO LOOK DOWN ON IT FROM HIGH ABOVE.

SOMETIMES YOU CAN SEE THE GOOD IN PEOPLE WITHOUT EVEN TRYING.

WHAT... WHAT'S THIS FOR?

IT'S FOR YOU.

YOU KNOW, THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT YOU. YOU'RE DIFFERENT.

AND SOMETIMES YOU CAN'T SEE THE BAD COMING AT YOU...

WHAT, YOU THINK IT'S HER BIRTHDAY TODAY? THAT'S SWEET.

DON'T--

YOU'RE DIFFERENT, YOU KNOW THAT?

FREAK.

...EVEN IF IT'S RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOUR FACE.

WHEN YOU CAN SEE EVERYTHING, SOMETIMES IT'S TOO MUCH. YOU WONDER WHERE LIFE TAKES ALL ITS LITTLE TURNS.

AND WHY SO MANY PEOPLE IN THIS WORLD ARE UNHAPPY.

AND WHAT YOU CAN DO TO CHANGE IT.

YOU'RE SO QUIET TONIGHT.

I JUST CAN'T HELP BUT WONDER.

A PURPOSE.

WONDER WHAT?

SOME PEOPLE GO THEIR WHOLE LIFE WITHOUT EVER HAVING ONE.

ALL THESE PEOPLE. ALL THESE FAMILIES. WE CAN LOOK OUT AT THEM NOW, AND IMAGINE A DIFFERENT SCENE IN EVERY ONE OF THEM. BUT THEY HAVE NO IDEA WE'RE WATCHING. THAT SOMEONE IS OUT THERE.

I COULD BE DOING MORE.

WITHOUT EVER REALIZING THE SIMPLE TRUTH...

YOU CAN'T CHANGE THE WHOLE WORLD. NO ONE CAN.

THAT SAVING THE WORLD CAN MEAN MANY THINGS.

MAYBE I CAN'T... BUT I CAN TRY.

LEAVING HOME IS NEVER EASY. FEW HAVE TO DO IT TWICE. I CAN TELL YOU IT DOESN'T GET EASIER THE SECOND TIME.

AS MUCH AS IT IS WHAT YOU LEAVE BEHIND THAT MAKES IT HARD...

...WHAT YOU TAKE WITH YOU CAN MAKE IT JUST AS DIFFICULT.

I SUPPOSE I COULD HAVE FLOWN OFF INTO THE DISTANCE. TRAVELING UNNOTICED, A FLEETING BLUR IN THE SKY.

BUT ON THAT DAY, FOR THIS JOURNEY, I CHOSE TO WALK AS A MAN...

INTO MY FUTURE.

IT WAS A LONG JOURNEY. BUT LIKE MOST THAT ARE WORTHWHILE, IT ENDED IN EXACTLY THE RIGHT PLACE.

A PLACE THAT SPOKE TO WHO I WAS.

TO WHERE I HAD COME FROM.

TO WHO I AM.

AND TO WHO I WAS DESTINED TO BE.

NO MONSTERS TO SLAY. NO VILLAINS TO BRING TO JUSTICE.

I BRING HOPE ONE DAY EACH YEAR.

ONE GIFT AT A TIME.

HO! HO! HO! Merry Christmas!

AQUAMAN IN

SOMEWHERE BEYOND THE SEA

BENEATH THE SEA, TIME HAS NO MEANING. I FIND MYSELF LOST, ADRIFT IN THE DARK. ALONE WITH MY THOUGHTS, MY MEMORIES. I DREAM OF THE DAYS I HAD A FAMILY, A FUTURE. BUT NOW, I HAVE NEITHER. MY WIFE GONE, MY CHILD DEAD, MY KINGDOM SHATTERED.

DAN DIDIO WRITER
IAN CHURCHILL ART
BOB RIVARD COLORS
TRAVIS LANHAM LETTERS

I FEEL MYSELF SINKING INTO DESPAIR, THEN, JOLTED INTO ACTION.

A LOST ANCHOR CAN ONLY MEAN DANGER TO THE SHIP ABOVE.

I SPRING INTO ACTION, FOR NO REASON OTHER THAN THAT'S WHAT KINGS DO.

I CAN ONLY WONDER WHAT TROUBLE AWAITS ME ON THE SURFACE.

PLEASE. DON'T. MY WIFE... SHE'S...

QUIET! I CARE NOTHING ABOUT YOU OR YOUR WIFE. YOUR SHIP, YOUR LIVES, ARE MINE NOW.

NOW WHERE IS IT!?! WHERE IS THE TREASURE?

THERE IS NO TREASURE ABOARD.

LIAR! I KNOW THIS SHIP CONTAINS A PRECIOUS CARGO. TELL ME WHERE IT IS!

MAYBE YOU WILL TRADE IT FOR THE LIFE OF YOUR PREGNANT WIFE.

LET ME GO... PLEASE.

CAPTAIN! COME HERE! QUICKLY!

HOW *DARE* YOU INTERRUPT ME!

OUTSIDE! IT'S A MAN. HE JUST... APPEARED.

THE SITUATION IS MORE DIRE THAN I IMAGINED.

THE WOMAN. RELEASE HER.

BACK DOWN, AQUAMAN, OR I, CAPTAIN BLANCO, WILL KILL HER WHERE SHE STANDS.

I HAVE HEARD OF THIS PIRATE AS HE HAS HEARD OF ME. HE IS COLD HEARTED AND NOT PRONE TO LIE. I STAND MOTIONLESS AND TURN INSIDE MYSELF AS MY MIND REACHES OUT TO THE SEA.

I SENSE *HIM* CLOSE BY. HE HAS BEEN FOLLOWING ME FOR MILES. FOLLOWING THE COLOR AND SPARKLES OF MY SHIRT LIKE A GLISTENING LURE.

HE'S HERE.

THE MYTH AS TOLD ON THE SURFACE IS ACTUALLY A REALITY BENEATH THE SEA. AT MY COMMAND THE KRAKEN RISES. IT TAKES ALL MY CONCENTRATION TO CONTROL A BEAST THIS SIZE, FILLED WITH UNBRIDLED FURY.

WOOD AND BONE SPLINTER BENEATH HIS COILS. I TRY TO PROTECT THE WOMAN BESIDE ME TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY, BUT THE NOISE OF THE SCREAMS AND CRACKING WOOD RISE OUT ABOVE THE STORM. MOST WOULD SHRINK AT THE SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF THIS BEAST, BUT THIS WOMAN, SHE SHOWS A POISE AND INNER STRENGTH THAT COMFORTS EVEN ME.

AND THEN, AS QUICKLY AS HE STRUCK, THE KRAKEN IS GONE. AS ARE ALL TRACES OF THE PIRATES AND THEIR SHIP. DISAPPEARING INTO THE SEA, ADDING A NEW LEGEND TO THE DEEP.

MARY! THANK GOD YOU'RE ALL RIGHT!

IT WAS AQUAMAN. HE SAVED ME, SAVED US BOTH.

WITH THAT THREAT GONE, MUST TURN TO THE NEXT, MORE IMMEDIATE DANGER. THE SHIP IS BLIND, CRIPPLED. NO WAY CAN IT STAND THIS STORM FOR LONG.

LET ME TAKE THE CONTROLS, I CAN LEAD US TO SHORE.

I HOPE THAT MY WORDS DO NOT RING HOLLOW. THIS STORM HAS LEFT ME DISORIENTED. TO FIND THE SHORE, I NEEDED A SIGN.

THERE. A LIGHT, A BEACON FROM THE SHORE. A SIGN. CUTTING THROUGH THE DARK AND THE RAIN. I POINT THE SHIP TOWARDS IT.

IT WAS THEN I REMEMBERED WHERE I WAS. FOR SOME REASON, THIS TIME OF YEAR, I ALWAYS FIND MYSELF HERE.

I SWAM THESE WATERS IN MY YOUTH. SOME OF MY HAPPIEST MEMORIES.

THE LIGHT, THIS LIGHTHOUSE. IT WAS MY FATHER'S. I THOUGHT IT LONG BROKEN.

INSTEAD, I FOLLOW IT TO SHORE, AND TO SAFETY.

ONCE ON SHORE, I REALIZE THE LIGHT WAS NOT FROM MY FATHER'S HOME, BUT FROM A STAR BURNING BRIGHTLY BEHIND IT. I ALSO REALIZE SOMETHING ELSE...

...WE ARE NOT ALONE.

I BRACE MYSELF, READY FOR THE NEXT THREAT. UNTIL I FEEL THE WOMAN'S GENTLE TOUCH. THERE IS A CONFIDENCE IN HER VOICE.

NO. WE ARE IN NO DANGER.

JOIN US, AQUAMAN. JOIN ME AS I GREET OUR FRIENDS.

I FEEL NOTHING BUT TRUST FOR THIS WOMAN. I FOLLOW HER WILLINGLY.

THE MEN, HER FRIENDS. DRESSED LIKE KINGS WITH A CARAVAN OF CARS BEHIND THEM.

AND BEHIND ME, THE STAR BURNS BRIGHTER AND MORE BEAUTIFUL.

I TURN BACK TO THE WOMAN, AND SUDDENLY, IT ALL MAKES SENSE.

INSTINCTIVELY, WILLINGLY, I JOIN THEM AND KNEEL BEFORE HER AND HER UNBORN CHILD. I LOOK AT THE OTHER MEN, WHO CAME BEARING GIFTS. I FEEL ASHAMED BECAUSE...

I'M SORRY, I HAVE NO GIFTS TO GIVE.

NO, SEA KING, YOU GAVE ME THE MOST IMPORTANT GIFT OF ALL.

THEY WALK AWAY. I KNOW I WILL NEVER SEE HER AGAIN, NEVER MEET HER CHILD. I SHOULD FEEL EMPTY, BUT THIS IS THE MOST SPECIAL OF NIGHTS. I FIGHT EVERY URGE TO JOIN THEM. INSTEAD I MAKE MY WAY TO MY ONE TRUE HOME, THE SEA .

IT EMBRACES ME, COMFORTS ME, WARMS MY SKIN, SOOTHES MY HEART AND SOUL. ITS COLORS BRIGHTEN MY SPIRITS AND BRING A SMILE TO MY LIPS.

THIS EVENING, BORN IN DEATH AND DESPAIR, FINDS ME REBORN WITH THE GREATEST FEELING OF ALL...

...HOPE.

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL.

Good King Wenceslas

Paul Dini
Writer
Dustin Nguyen
Art & Color
Patrick Brosseau
Letterer

Good King Wenceslas looked out
On the feast of Stephen,
When the snow lay 'round about,
Deep and crisp and even.

Brightly shone the moon that night,
Though the frost was cruel,
When a poor man came in sight,
Gath'ring winter fuel.

"Hither, page, and stand by me.
If thou know'st it, telling,
Yonder peasant, who is he?
Where and what his dwelling?"

"Sire, he lives a good league hence
Underneath the mountain;
Right against the forest fence,
By Saint Agnes' fountain."

"Bring me flesh, and bring me wine,
Bring me pine logs hither.
Thou and I will see him dine
When we bear them thither."

Page and monarch forth they went,
Forth they went together,
Through the rude wind's wild lament
And the bitter weather.

"Sire, the night is darker now,
And the wind blows stronger;
Fails my heart, I know not how;
I can go no longer.

"Mark my footsteps, my good page;
Tread thou in them boldly.
Thou shalt find the winter's rage
Freeze thy blood less coldly."

In his master's steps he trod,
Where the snow lay dinted;
Heat was in the very sod
Which the saint had
printed.

Therefore, everyone, be sure,
Wealth or rank possessing,

Ye who now will bless the poor,
Shall yourselves find blessing.

End

GOTHAM CITY. 6:58 A.M.

THERE HE IS! READY AN' WAITING, COMMISH.

ONE WAY

YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE, BERNIE. MY *ONLY* SUNSHINE, THIS TIME OF DAY.

AWW, COME ON. TODAY'S ALL ROSES AN' ICE CREAM, I BET. IT'S YOUR BIG "DAY OFF," AIN'T IT?

"DAY OFF"? YOU STARTING EARLY ON THE IRISH COFFEES, BERNIE?

SPONSORED BY GOTHAM FEDERAL BANK

PUT DOWN THE BOTTLE

PUT DOWN THE GUN

PUT DOWN THE DRUG

A DAY WITHOUT SIRENS

THIS HOLIDAY SEASON, JOIN US FOR ONE DAY IN GOTHAM CITY WHERE CRIME AN[illegible]EAR ARE REPLACED BY [illegible]MP[illegible]ON AND LOVE

Y'DIDN'T HEAR? NO CRIME IN GOTHAM CITY TODAY! ALL DAY!

THE DEALERS AN' PIMPS AN' CRACKHEADS GONNA BE SINGING KOOMBAYA DOWN AT THE PARK.

STUPID SIGNS ARE ALL OVER THE CITY. ON THE RADIO TOO... "DAY WITHOUT SIRENS."

CAN YOU IMAGINE?

IN MY CITY, ON ANY GIVEN DAY DURING THE TWO WEEKS BEFORE CHRISTMAS...

I HONESTLY CAN'T.

THERE WILL BE FIVE INCIDENCES OF GUN VIOLENCE. ONE WILL BE A HOMICIDE. TWO OR THREE WILL BE DISCHARGES AT MY OFFICERS.

THE REST WILL BE KIDS, MESSING AROUND.

ARSON DOUBLES BECAUSE OF ALL THE DAMN CANDLES EVERYWHERE. SMASH-AND-GRAB LARCENY GOES THROUGH THE ROOF.

AND LEST WE FORGET...THE SUICIDES. JUMPERS, O.D.S, AND THE BONUS *MURDER*/SUICIDES WILL INCREASE THIRTY PERCENT BETWEEN DECEMBER 21ST AND JANUARY 2ND.

A DAY WITHOUT SIRENS

MERRY CHRISTMAS. GOD BLESS US, EVERY ONE.

7:30 A.M.

SOMEONE FORGET TO TELL ME WE DOUBLE-STAFFED TODAY?

WHY THE HELL ISN'T ANYONE OUT?

WE WERE, I MEAN... WE WOULD BE...

YOU'RE NOT GONNA BELIEVE THIS, SIR...WE HAVEN'T GOTTEN A CALL SINCE MIDNIGHT. 12:01 TO BE EXACT.

AND YES, WE CHECKED THE PHONES.

TEN TIMES.

10:00 A.M.

"A DAY WITHOUT SIRENS?" I DIDN'T THINK THAT MANY PEOPLE IN THIS CITY COULD READ.

IT WAS ON THE RADIO TOO.

THIS DOESN'T HAPPEN. IT JUST DOESN'T. WE NEED TO TEST THE LINES--

GOD HELP ME...IT ISN'T SADNESS I FEEL WHEN IT FINALLY RINGS...OR EVEN SURPRISE...

RIIINNG

IT'S *SMUG DEFIANCE* THAT THE DIRTBAGS DIDN'T LET ME DOWN.

GORDON...

...

WHAT?

11:11 A.M.

"MCKEOWN, YOU CHECKED YOUR PHONES?

"EVERY FIFTEEN, GORDON. TRIED CELLS, PAY PHONES, EVERYTHING.

"THE DAMN CALLS GO THROUGH TO 911. THEY SAY THE ONLY A-HOLES CALLING TODAY ARE *US*.

"I BEEN WITH THE F.D.G.C. FOR TWENTY YEARS, JIMMY. I *NEVER* HAD A DAY WHERE THE ONLY CALL WAS A CAT ON A GODDAMN LEDGE.

"AND IT CAME FROM YOU.

"DO YOU THINK THIS 'SIREN' THING--?"

"DON'T EVEN SAY IT, JIMMY. DON'T GIVE 'EM THAT MUCH CREDIT. JUST GUARANTEEING DISAPPOINTMENT."

1:08 P.M.

ALL THIS QUIET IS GONNA KILL ME.

SOMEONE PUT ON MUSIC OR SOMETHING. RHONDA, CALL TWO BOOTS...

...I'M BUYING LUNCH.

8:41 P.M.

...

YOU CAN DO IT. COME ON...

5:54 P.M.

...DESK SERGEANT HERRING HAS CONFIRMED THERE HAS NOT BEEN A SINGLE EMERGENCY CALL TO EITHER THE POLICE DEPARTMENT OR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT SINCE 12:01 THIS MORNING.

FROM ALL INDICATIONS, GOTHAMITES HAVE TAKEN NOTICE OF THE "DAY WITHOUT SIRENS" CAMPAIGN...

GCPD

11:59 P.M.

IT'S JUST SHY OF *TWENTY-FOUR HOURS*...AND THERE HAVE BEEN NO CALLS.

NO SHOTS FIRED. NO BODY BAGS UNZIPPED. NO FAMILIES SHATTERED.

THE ONLY EXPLANATION THAT I CAN COME UP WITH...

...IS THAT *GRACE* STILL LIVES IN *OUR CITY*. WE SHOULD ALL WALK AWAY FROM TODAY... CARRYING A LITTLE *HOPE* IN OUR POCKETS.

12:00 A.M.

12:01 A.M.

RIIINNGG

LANDESMAN, HOMICIDE...

OKAY. ON OUR WAY.

DOUBLE HOMICIDE, MIDTOWN HEIGHTS.

OKAY, THEN...

GET YOUR HEADS BACK ON, PEOPLE.

PARTY'S OVER.

IT COULDN'T LAST. YOU KNOW THAT.

YEAH... YEAH...

BUT YOU'RE SMILING.

IF THE WHOLE CITY... *THIS* CITY, WAS ABLE TO SET THE CRAP ASIDE FOR ONE DAY...

IT MEANS THEY CAN DO IT AGAIN.

THAT'S *SOMETHING*. YOU DON'T THINK SO?

MM.

I FORGET I USED TO LOVE THIS TIME OF YEAR. EVEN WHEN THINGS WERE AT THEIR WORST.

THE DEPARTMENT GIVES DETECTIVES A CLOTHING ALLOWANCE, END OF THE YEAR. YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BUY A SUIT, BUT WE ALL JUST PLAYED SANTA WITH IT.

THAT'S WHY DETECTIVES ARE SUCH CRAPPY DRESSERS. PLAYING SANTA.

WHAT'S YOUR EXCUSE NOW?

...

DID YOU JUST MAKE A JOKE?

...

A *MIRACLE.*

THE PATCH IS OUT. DIGITAL SIEVE DISENGAGED...

EMERGENCY SERVICES ARE ONCE AGAIN LIVE... ANNNND...

WE'RE DONE.

HALLE-FREAKING-LUJAH. I'M GOING TO SLEEP FOR A WEEK.

AFTER I ***SHOWER*** FOR A WEEK. NEXT YEAR, WE SHOULD PLAY "A DAY WITHOUT GARBAGE."

SURE, I CAN SEE THAT AS A STOP MOTION HOLIDAY SPECIAL.

WHAT'S STOP MOTION?

NEVER MIND...

...JUST REST EASY KNOWING YOU DID SOMETHING SPECIAL TODAY.

YOU REALLY THINK SO? DO YOU THINK THIS ***ONE DAY*** IS GOING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

I KNOW SO.

NEVER DISCOUNT THE HEALING POWER OF A LITTLE ***HOPE***, KARA.

A DAY WITHOUT SIRENS

writer: joe kelly art: mick bertilorenzi
color: pam rambo letters: travis lanham

This is my own fault! I've had plenty of time to deliver this all week long.

NIGHTWING & ROBIN IN

IT'S A WONDERFUL NIGHT

But there's just something magical about delivering and getting a present on Christmas Eve.

Writers: Art Baltazar & Franco Aureliani
Pencils: Tim Levins
Inks: Dan Davis
Letters: Sal Cipriano
Colors: Heroic Age

Bruce does this on a grand scale. He delivers presents by the truckload to orphanages all over Gotham.

This one needs to be delivered personally.

Hopefully I'm still in time to play Santa and catch him there. Didn't expect to find these guys on the way. They're just taking up time I don't have.

Magical might be what I'm hoping for...

...but I guess the theme for the evening would have to be--unexpected.

If he's not already here, he should be soon.

THANK YOU SO MUCH! YOU WANT TO SHOP HERE ANYTIME-- COFFEE IS ON THE HOUSE!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS.

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE

Wait!! There should be only him--

who's the other guy?

MAJESTIC

BALCONY SECTION CLOSED

ROBIN!?

BOOMERANG??

OK, WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

I'M HERE TO SEE MY DAD'S FAVORITE MOVIE...

I KNOW, BATMAN TOLD ME YOU WOULD BE HERE--BUT WHAT ARE *YOU* DOING HERE?

WELL, ACTUALLY THIS WAS *MY* DAD'S FAVORITE MOVIE TOO.

WELL...

YEAH--WELL, I GUESS WE CAN ALL WATCH THE MOVIE TOGETHER. EVER SINCE MY DAD DIED...I FEEL...

...IT SEEMS LIKE THE MORE TIME THAT GOES BY, THE LESS OF MY DAD I HAVE. IT'S NOT LIKE I CAN SEE HIM ANYTIME I WANT ANYMORE--

I COME HOME...HE'S NOT THERE. THE ONLY THINGS I HAVE OF HIM NOW ARE MEMORIES.

THIS WAS ONE OF THE THINGS THAT WE DID TOGETHER EVERY HOLIDAY SINCE I CAN REMEMBER... EVERY CHRISTMAS EVE.

I CAN GO IF--

I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL.

IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU BOTH...OWEN, IF I KNEW YOU WERE GOING TO BE HERE I WOULD HAVE GOTTEN YOU SOMETHING, SOCKS OR BOOMERANGS OR--WHERE DO YOU ACTUALLY GET BOOMERANGS OUTSIDE OF AUSTRALIA?

FUNNY.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS, ROBIN.

SOMETHING I HAD LYING AROUND--I DON'T REALLY USE IT MUCH ANY-MORE.

IF YOU GUYS ARE HERE NEXT YEAR, LET ME KNOW. I'LL BUY THE POPCORN.

NIGHTWING, DICK... THANKS FOR THE PRESENT-- IT MEANS A LOT.

YOU HAVEN'T OPENED IT YET.

YOU KNOW, THERE'S SOMETHING KINDA...MAGICAL ABOUT THIS FILM, Y'KNOW, THE WAY IT MAKES YOU FEEL.

HE'S ALL RIGHT. NIGHTWING, I MEAN.

YEAH... YEAH, HE IS.

Don't get any stains on it.

Your "Big Brother"

END

CHRISTMAS WITH THE BEETLES

writer: J.C. VAUGHN pencils: LEE GARBETT
inks: TREVOR SCOTT color: PETE PANTAZIS letterer: TRAVIS LANHAM

DONNIE COLE, THIEF. MANY YEARS AGO.
I'LL TEACH YOU TO BUTT IN!
LONNIE COLE, THIEF. NOT QUITE AS MANY YEARS AGO.
C'MON, YOU COSTUMED FREAK! COME AT ME!
LOUIE COLE, THIEF JUST A FEW MONTHS AGO.
D-DON'T COME ANY CLOSER! I--I DON'T WANT TO, BUT I WILL...

TODAY. SANCHEZ STATE JAIL, EL PASO, TEXAS.

A 1,001-BED FACILITY FOR MEN INCARCERATED IN THE EL PASO AREA.

RICHARD! I'M REALLY GLAD YOU CAME, SON!

KRAK

BAM

KA-POW!

HAPPY HANUKKAH

SO I SUPPOSE THERE'S A GOOD REASON YOU WANTED ME TO DRAG MYSELF DOWN HERE ON CHRISTMAS EVE?

CHRISTMAS

YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE EXCEPT JAIL, CREEP.

ONE PUNCH! ONE PUNCH!

WHERE'S BATMAN WHEN YOU REALLY NEED HIM TO SEE SOMETHING?

I SWEAR I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING, MOM...

SUBJECT NO LONGER COHERENT.

I KNOW! I DIDN'T EVEN HIT HIM THAT HARD!

LOOK, I KNOW YOU DON'T WANT TO BE HERE, AND I KNOW I'VE BEEN A LOUSY DAD.

AND I KNOW THERE WERE PLENTY OF CHRISTMASES THAT I LET YOU DOWN...

JUST LIKE A LOT OF OTHER DAYS.

ALL MY LIFE I'VE BEEN MAKING EXCUSES. I'M DONE WITH THAT.

TODAY I JUST WANT TO TELL YOU WHY I THINK THINGS HAVE HAPPENED THE WAY THEY HAVE.

MY GRANDFATHER DONNIE FOUGHT THE FIRST BLUE BEETLE AND LOST.

MY FATHER FOUGHT THE SECOND BLUE BEETLE AND LOST.

AND YOU FOUGHT THE NEW BLUE BEETLE AND LOST?

NOT ONLY DID I GET BUSTED BY THE NEW BLUE BEETLE, I MOVED MY FAMILY ACROSS THE COUNTRY TO AVOID GETTING BUSTED BY THE BLUE BEETLE...

AND STILL GOT TAKEN DOWN BY HIM.

GREAT. A FAMILY OF THREE-TIME LOSERS. AT LEAST I'VE GOT THAT GOING FOR ME.

COLE

I'VE BUSTED YOU TWICE NOW, MAN, AND I HAVEN'T BEEN DOING THIS THAT LONG.

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED ANOTHER LINE OF WORK? YOU'RE JUST NOT THAT GOOD AT THIS ONE...

YOU'RE RIGHT, SON.

AND I JUST DON'T WANT YOU TO END UP LIKE US.

WHOA, DAD, THAT'S NOT HAPPENING TO ME. JUST BECAUSE YOU GUYS--

MY GRANDFATHER WAS A HARD MAN. MY OLD MAN WAS AN ABSOLUTE PSYCHO. THEY BOTH KNEW THE GAME THEY WERE PLAYING.

BUT I WASN'T MEANT FOR THIS KIND OF LIFE. I KNEW IT, I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT, AND HERE I AM.

NOW, UNLIKE A LOT OF YEARS, I ACTUALLY HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOU THIS CHRISTMAS.

YOU'RE GOING TO START BEING A GOOD DAD NOW? FROM PRISON?

I'M GOING TO TRY.

SO WHAT'S THIS BIG SPECIAL PRESENT YOU HAVE FOR ME, DAD? A SHIV? A PACK OF SMOKES?

I WANT YOU TO WALK AWAY FROM ALL OF THIS. TAKE YOUR MOTHER IF YOU CAN, BUT GET YOURSELF OUT AND DO IT NOW.

YOU'RE NOT MEANT FOR THIS LIFE EITHER. EVEN IF YOU NEVER SEE ME AGAIN.

BUT I'M NOT--

I KNOW YOU'RE HANGING WITH VENDO'S CREW AND HE'S PLANNING A BIG JOB.

BUT HOW--

I HAVE FRIENDS. IT HASN'T GONE DOWN YET. YOU STILL DON'T HAVE A RECORD AND THAT'S WHY YOU STILL HAVE A CHANCE, RICHARD.

MA? YEAH, IT'S ME. I SAW DAD. IT WAS ACTUALLY A GOOD VISIT, BUT WE NEED TO TALK AS SOON AS I GET HOME, OKAY?

THIS IS AN ADVANTAGEOUS CONCLUSION?

YEAH, THIS IS GOING TO BE A FANTASTIC CHRISTMAS!

END

HUNTRESS IN
AN ANGEL TOLD ME

writer: AMANDA MCMURRAY art: RAFAEL ALBUQUERQUE
colorist: CRIS PETER letterer: TRAVIS LANHAM

I SPEND MY NIGHTS STALKING CRIMINALS THROUGH THE SHADOWY STREETS OF GOTHAM'S CRIME-RIDDEN CITY AS THE HUNTRESS...

...WHERE DRUGGED OUT THUGS THROW BULLETS AT EACH OTHER, LUNATICS ROB BANKS FOR FUN, BUT...

...IT'S NOTHING COMPARED TO TEACHING!

HEY MS. B!

HI MS. B!

GOOD MORNING, GIRLS!

IT'S EASY WHEN YOU CAN SMACK THE "BAD GUY" AROUND...

...BUT HIGH SCHOOL...

...IS LIKE BEING IN A PRISON WHERE THEY HAND THE GUNS TO THE INMATES AND TELL THE GUARDS NOT TO HURT THEM.

SOMETIMES I HAVE TO REMIND MYSELF THAT THEY'RE JUST KIDS.

I HAVE TO REMEMBER THAT IF NO ONE EVER SHOWS THEM HOW LIFE IS SUPPOSED TO BE...

...THEY'RE JUST GOING TO FOLLOW THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE TRODDEN AND MUDDY PATH IN FRONT OF THEM ALREADY.

TO THEM, THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED IS NOTHING BUT A STUPID POEM, ABOUT A STUPID FOREST, WRITTEN BY A DEAD WHITE GUY WHO OBVIOUSLY DIDN'T HAVE MAPQUEST.

ding ding ding

IT'S SO MUCH EASIER BEING THE HUNTRESS THAN HELENA.

SO MUCH EASIER.

THINGS ARE SO BLACK AND WHITE. THEY'RE EITHER THE BAD GUY OR THE GOOD GUY, BUT HERE, IT'S NEVER THAT SIMPLE.

BULLYING ONE OF MS. WALDEN'S KIDS IS PRETTY LOW, ALEJANDRO. DON'T YOU THINK THEY HAVE A HARD ENOUGH TIME? YOU KNOW CHARGES COULD BE PRESSED AND IT'S AN AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION FOR THIS TYPE OF BEHAVIOR. I JUST DON'T GET IT.

HE'S ALREADY MISSED 37 DAYS THIS QUARTER. SUSPENDING HIM JUST PUTS HIM OUT ON THE STREETS WHERE HE WANTS TO BE. I HAVE ANOTHER IDEA IF YOU'RE OPEN TO IT.

I'M ALL EARS.

KNIGHTS

ALEJANDRO ALREADY HAS TO REPORT TO THE JANITORAFTER SCHOOL TWICE A WEEK TO WORK OFF RESTITUTION AND COMPLETE HIS COMMUNITY SERVICE--

--I'D LIKE TO SWITCH THAT TO THE *REACH* PROGRAM WHERE I'LL MONITOR HIS HOURS INSTEAD.

THIS IS BULL! YOU CAN'T DO THIS.

ACTUALLY, I CAN, AND...I THINK IT'S A GREAT IDEA.

FORGET IT!

IT'S YOUR DECISION, ALEJANDRO, BUT IF I WERE YOU, I'D TAKE THE DEAL. IF WE SUSPEND YOU, PROBATION WILL HAVE TO BE NOTIFIED--

--AND I BELIEVE THIS IS YOUR LAST STRIKE, IS IT NOT? WHICH MEANS, YOU GO BACK TO LOCKUP...

PERES 3

THIS SUCKS!

STEWART

FWAM

WHERE'D HE GET THE BRUISE?

GOOD QUESTION.

SEE. IN EDUCATION, NOTHING IS BLACK AND WHITE.

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER THAN TO MIX MY DAY JOB AND MY NIGHT LIFE.

I WORK TWO JOBS... WHAT DO *YOU* DO!?! HUH?!? YOU MAKE MESSES, EAT MY FOOD, AND WHAT'S THIS CRAP!?!

ALEJANDRO'S WORLD MADE SENSE NOW.

F'S!?! YOU'RE LAZY, AND YOU'RE STUPID!

YEAH, WELL AT LEAST I'M NOT A DRUNK!

YOU'RE JUST LIKE YOUR MOTHER!

ALL OF THIS VIOLENCE AND ANGER...IT'S JUST FEAR RUN WILD. HIS FATHER PASSING IT ON TO HIS SON, AND ALEJANDRO PASSING IT ON TO SOMEONE ELSE.

THE PROBLEM IS THAT THEY STILL HAVE TO GO HOME AT NIGHT, WHERE THEY HAVE TO FEEL AFRAID, IN A PLACE WHERE THEY SHOULD FEEL SAFE.

WHEN YOU FIRST SEE THE BRUISES YOU'RE OUTRAGED. YOU, OF COURSE, REPORT IT, THINKING YOU'RE "SAVING" A KID.

IT'S JUST NEVER THAT SIMPLE.

THE NEXT DAY THE KID SHOWS UP WITH A BROKEN ARM.

YOU END UP WISHING YOU'D JUST KEPT YOUR MOUTH SHUT IN THE FIRST PLACE.

NOW, I'M A LOT MORE CAREFUL... I DON'T ASK.

AND THIS...THIS DOESN'T COUNT.

BAM

HUNTRESS ISN'T A MANDATORY REPORTER, AND WHAT "HELENA" DOESN'T KNOW WON'T HURT HER.

HANG IN THERE, KID.

THERE'S MORE THAN ONE WAY TO SOLVE A PROBLEM.

WHERE YOU FIND ONE CRIME... THERE'RE ALWAYS MORE.

WATCH 'EM LONG ENOUGH, AND THEY'LL HANG THEMSELVES.

I WAS JUST LUCKY HE DECIDED THAT TONIGHT WAS A GOOD NIGHT TO "DIE."

UUMMMMF!

CRASSH

PROVING CHILD ABUSE TAKES MONTHS... SOMETIMES YEARS. ESPECIALLY IN CASES LIKE THIS, BUT A NICE POSSESSION AND DISTRIBUTION CHARGE, WORSENED BY AN ILLEGAL FIREARMS POSSESSION, OUGHTTA DO THE TRICK NICELY.

SANTA SAYS YOU'VE BEEN VERY NAUGHTY BOYS!

HE'LL BE AWAY LONG ENOUGH TO GET ALEJANDRO SETTLED WITH HIS GRANDMOTHER AND BACK ON THE RIGHT TRACK.

YOU GUYS AREN'T OVERLY BRIGHT, ARE YOU?

GRANDMA ALSO NEEDS SOME HELP THESE DAYS, AND I'M BETTING THAT IT'D BE NICE IF ALEJANDRO LIVED IN A PLACE WHERE HE FELT NEEDED--

I WOULDN'T LEAVE THAT KIND OF MERCHANDISE OUT ON THE LIVING ROOM TABLE. ANYONE WANDERING BY CAN SEE IT.

'COURSE, I'VE NEVER KNOWN A SMART DRUG DEALER.

--AND WANTED, BUT MOST IMPORTANT **LOVED.**

THERE'S ALWAYS A STORY BEHIND THESE KIDS.

YOU KNOW...YOU *CAN* ASK QUESTIONS. IT'S OKAY.

I DON'T THINK I'VE TOLD YOU WHAT *REACH* IS, HAVE I?

SOME SORT OF RETARDED HELPING PROGRAM OR SOMETHING...

HMMM... I TELL YOU WHAT...MAYBE IT'S BETTER IF I JUST SHOW YOU?

Reach

GRAB THAT, WOULD YA? THEY'RE KIND OF HEAVY.

HOW'S IT GOING WITH YOUR GRANDMOTHER?

FINE.

MRS. FISCHER TOLD ME THAT YOU WERE LIVING WITH HER NOW.

YEAH, SHE NEEDED SOME HELP OR SOMETHIN'.

THAT WAS NICE OF YOU.

I COULD SEE IT IN HIS FACE; AVOIDING ANY EYE CONTACT WITH ME AND TELLING ME ONLY A PIECE OF THE STORY.

HE WAS BEGGING ME NOT TO PROBE ANY DEEPER. IT WAS TOO PAINFUL...TOO RAW... AND HE NEEDED TO KEEP SOME OF HIS PRIDE INTACT.

HOP IN. WE'RE ALL DONE.

HEY! DO ME A FAVOR, WILL YA?

HUH?

WHAT WORD?

DON'T USE THAT WORD ANYMORE?

RETARDED.

WHY?

IT DOESN'T MEAN WHAT YOU THINK IT MEANS.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN, THEN?

YOU EVER KNOW WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO BE MISUNDERSTOOD? TO BE DIFFERENT IN WAYS THAT YOU CAN'T HELP...LIKE YOUR SKIN COLOR, OR HOW MUCH MONEY YOU HAVE...

I THOUGHT IT MEANT "STUPID."

IT DOES, BUT IT SPECIFICALLY INSULTS PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

WHAT'S A DISABILITY?

YOU KNOW HOW YOUR GRANDMA HAS TO USE A WALKER?

YEAH.

THAT'S A DISABILITY.

OH.

THAT KID WE WERE...

...PICKING ON?

YEAH.

HE'S AUTISTIC.

AU-WHAT-TIC?

AUTISTIC. IT BASICALLY MEANS THAT HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND THE THINGS MOST TEENAGERS UNDERSTAND ABOUT HOW TO INTERACT WITH PEOPLE.

WHEN YOU GUYS LAUGH AT HIM, HE THINKS YOU'RE PLAYING WITH HIM. HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND THAT A SMILE CAN MEAN A THOUSAND THINGS. HE JUST KNOWS THAT IT MEANS "HAPPY."

DOES THAT MAKE SENSE?

A'IGHT. NO MORE "R" WORD.

WHERE ARE WE?

YOU'LL SEE.

Reach

Rea

MS. B! ALEJANDRO! COME IN! WE HAVE CHRISTMAS COOKIES!

HERE! I HAVE A PRESENT FOR YOU! I WRAP FOR YOU.

IT WAS MY MOTHER'S. WHEN SHE SENT ME HERE TO AMERICA, SHE GAVE IT TO ME. SHE TOLD ME THAT BESIDES ME, IT WAS THE MOST PRECIOUS THING SHE OWNED.

SHE SAID THAT IT WILL GIVE HOPE TO ANYONE WHO OWNS IT; THAT NO MATTER HOW SAD OR SCARED YOU ARE, THINGS WOULD BE OKAY.

WHY... I MEAN... HOW... DID YOU KNOW?

AN ANGEL TOLD ME.

SOMETHING THAT HUNTRESS CAN NEVER BE.

THE END

Teen Titans in

THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS...

Writer: REX OGLE
Artist: MIKE DIMOTTA
Letterer: TRAVIS LANHAM

LOOK AT THAT TREE. IT'S BEAUTIFUL.

TIM, THIS WAS THE *PERFECT* IDEA.

IT'S ABOUT TIME WE TOOK A BREAK, IF ONLY FOR A NIGHT.

BUT USING THE T-WING FOR PERSONAL USE?

DON'T TELL CYBORG.

I LOVE THE HOLIDAYS.

I'M GLAD YOU CAME. IT WOULDN'T BE THE SAME WITHOUT YOU.

BARF.

LASSIE SANDSMARK: WONDER GIRL

TIM DRAKE: ROBIN

JAIME REYES: BLUE BEETLE

TRACI 13

AMY ALLEN: BOMBSHELL

EDDIE BLOOMBERG: RED DEVIL

WELL, TITANS, I WAS THINKING WE COULD ALL SPLIT UP. YOU KNOW, DO SOME LAST-MINUTE HOLIDAY SHOPPING, CHECK OUT THE SIGHTS, ET CETERA. HOW ABOUT WE MEET BACK HERE IN ONE HOUR?

SOUNDS GOOD TO ME.

LOSERS.

CASSIE, HOLD ON. I WAS ACTUALLY HOPING WE COULD TALK. IS THAT OKAY?

OF COURSE, TIM. CAN WE GET SOME HOT CHOCOLATE ON THE WAY?

ABSOLUTELY.

HEY BLUE, LET'S GO CHECK OUT THE SONY STORE. I HEAR THEY HAVE SOME RAD NEW PS3 GAMES WE *TOTALLY* HAVE TO BUY.

ACTUALLY, BUDDY, I KINDA PROMISED TRACI I WOULD TAKE HER FOR A HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGE RIDE IN CENTRAL PARK. NEXT TIME?

EW.

THANKS FOR LETTING ME TAG ALONG.

BABE, ARE YOU KIDDING? THESE ARE THE PERKS OF DATING A *BONA FIDE*, GRADE-A SUPERHERO.

I HATE YOU, TRACI 13.

WELL, I GUESS THAT JUST LEAVES YOU AND ME, AMY. YOU WANNA--

DROP DEAD.

AWESOME.

BUCKS COFFEE

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE HOT CHOCOLATE?

I JUST LOVE THE WAY APPLE CIDER SMELLS. I COULDN'T RESIST.

IT REMINDS ME OF BEING A LITTLE GIRL AGAIN, AND MY MOM LETTING ME OPEN PRESENTS EARLY ON CHRISTMAS EVE. THE PERKS OF BEING AN ONLY CHILD.

TIM, WHAT IS IT?

IT'S THE HOLIDAYS. THEY REMIND ME OF EVERYONE I'VE LOST. BART. CONNER. MY DAD.

TIM, I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T MEAN TO--

BUT THAT'S JUST IT, CASSIE. I'M NOT SAD. I'M GRATEFUL.

I'M *ALIVE.* I HELP SAVE LIVES EVERY DAY. I'M MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE. IN MY OWN WAY, I FEEL LIKE I'M LIVING FOR THOSE WHO CAN'T.

DOES THAT MAKE SENSE?

MORE THAN YOU KNOW.

I *AM* WORRIED ABOUT THE TEAM THOUGH. TEEN TITANS IS SUPPOSED TO BE A FAMILY, BUT RIGHT NOW IT SEEMS LIKE MORE OF A--

A MESS? I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN.

IF WE'RE A FAMILY, WE'RE A DYSFUNCTIONAL ONE AT BEST.

EXACTLY. IT'S WEIRD TO THINK THAT WE USED TO BE SO TIGHT KNIT, AND NOW WE'RE BARELY A TEAM.

NO, WE'RE STILL A TEAM. WE'RE JUST... *CHANGING* INTO SOMETHING NEW...

I *HATE* THAT I'M LIKE THIS.

MY WHOLE LIFE, I'VE NEVER FELT LIKE ANYTHING BUT AN OUTSIDER. THEN I *DIED*.

AND NOW, HERE ARE THESE SICKENINGLY *SWEET* TEEN HEROES WHO HAVE OFFERED ME A HOME, AND PROTECTION, AND I JUST...

...UGH. I JUST CAN'T *STAND* THEM.

BUT IT ISN'T THEM. IT'S *ME*. I KNOW THAT.

I'D LOVE TO JUST SIT BACK AND BUDDY UP TO THEM AND BE BEST FRIENDS. BUT I'VE ALREADY DUG A HOLE. THEY ALREADY HATE ME.

GOD, ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING UP THERE?

PRAYING *AND* TALKING OUT LOUD? I'VE BEEN HANGING WITH THOSE GOODY TWO-SHOES FOR TOO LONG. I'VE LOST IT.

YEAH, YEAH, YEAH. I'LL TRY HARDER.

ALONE.
AGAIN.
SHOCKING.
YOU'RE NOT ALONE, SILLY.
WHAAAUGHH?!? MEGAN??
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN??
LET'S JUST SAY, I'VE BEEN KEEPING A PROMISE.
I CAN'T STAY LONG EITHER. I JUST WANTED TO SAY HI. SO... *HI!*
ARE YOU KIDDING? YOU'VE BEEN MISSING FOR WEEKS, AND YOU'RE JUST GOING TO DROP BY AND GIVE THE TEAM A VAGUE "HOW YA DOING?"
I'M NOT SAYING HI TO THE TEAM. JUST *YOU.* I MISSED YOU.
HUH?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME I LEFT THE TEEN TITANS? I COULD HEAR WHAT PEOPLE THOUGHT ABOUT EACH OTHER. ABOUT ME. THEY HURT MY FEELINGS. A LOT.
I HAVE TO GO, BUT I'LL BE BACK SOON. I PROMISE.
BUT YOU-- YOU *NEVER* HAD ANYTHING BAD TO THINK ABOUT ANYBODY. YOU ALWAYS THINK THE BEST OF PEOPLE. YOU'RE A GOOD PERSON, EDDIE BLOOMBERG--
--AND A GOOD FRIEND.
SO, CHEER UP.
HOT DAMN!

DO YOU THINK I HURT HIS FEELINGS? I THINK I PRETENDED TO BE JERKIER THAN I MEANT TO.

HE'S GOING TO FORGIVE YOU THE SECOND HE SEES WHAT YOU BOUGHT HIM FOR CHRISTMAS.

YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT. WE BETTER HURRY THOUGH. WE'RE LATE TO MEET THE--UH-OH...

"...TROUBLE."

SNATCH & DASH, BOYS!

YEE-HAW!

GIVE IT UP, YA OLD HAG!

I BETTER SUIT UP--

EASY, TIGER. I THINK YOUR TEAMMATES HAVE IT COVERED.

OOPS. I HOPE THAT DIDN'T HURT TOO MUCH.

SLAM

--UKK!

AGHHHH! HELP!! THE DEVIL!!

ACTUALLY, IT'S *RED* DEVIL.

AND, DUDE, REALLY? YOU'RE GONNA MISBEHAVE ON CHRISTMAS? WHAT WOULD *SANTA* SAY?

CRACK

OOMPH!

OFFICER, I BELIEVE THESE GENTLEMEN BELONG WITH YOU.

MUCH APPRECIATED, YOUNG LADY.

BUT I WANTED TO BEAT UP BAD GUYS AND SAVE THE DAY.

POOR THING. I'M SURE YOU'LL GET ANOTHER CHANCE...

AND THESE MUST BE YOURS.

THANK YOU SO MUCH.

ARE YOU ONE OF SANTA'S ELVES?

SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

YOU DID GOOD TONIGHT, AMY.

VERY GOOD.

YEAH, I KNOW--

I MEAN, UM... *THANKS.*

FYI, TRACI PICKED THESE OUT FOR YOU.

VENGEFUL DEATH 4. GODS OF BATTLE 2. ***SAMURAI KITTEN!*** TRACI, I THINK I LOVE YOU.

CHANGING INTO SOMETHING NEW, HUH?

YUP. I THINK THE TEAM IS *EVOLVING.* INTO SOMETHING *BETTER.*

HAPPY HOLIDAYS, CASS.

YOU TOO, TIM.

END

HO! HO! HO! MERRRRRY CHRISTMAS!

CRA-A-ACK

R-R-RAHHH!

SWEET CHRISTMAS!

KUMP

JEEZ...!

YII!

AYY!

HO! HO!...

LOOK, MOMMY! CHEWBACCA!

ZWIP

GRUH?

MWOO-OWWW...

SOMEONE'S BEEN CELEBRATING.

1500CC OF BAT'S NERVE DRUG. IT CAN FLATTEN *TITANO.*

SHAGGYMAN-- DIZZY.

HEY, THE HAIRBALL TALKS!

ARE YOU ELF?

RI-I-IGHT, AND YOU'RE THE *COOKIE MONSTER.*

HAW-HAW!

smack

WHERE ARE YOU GUYS? THE PARTY STARTED AN *HOUR* AGO.

WE JUST CAPTURED *SHAGGYMAN.*

FWIP

NOW? YOU COULDN'T WAIT UNTIL AFTER THE HOLIDAYS? I'VE BEEN PLANNING THIS FOR *TWO MONTHS,* JOHN. IT'S THE *ONE TIME* WHEN WE CAN ALL GET TOGETHER.

NOW YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO TAKE HIM TO *S.T.A.R. SECURITY,* FILL OUT REPORTS, SIGN PAPERS...IT'S GONNA TAKE *FOREVER!*

CAN'T YOU AT LEAST GET *ROY* OVER HERE? I *NEED* HIM.

=Yawn!=

WHATSA MATTER?

NOBODY KNOWS HOW TO HAVE *FUN* IN THIS CROWD. ALL THEY KNOW HOW TO DO IS *FIGHT.*

I TELL YA, I SHOULD *NEVER'VE* MADE BATMAN THE DOOR GREETER.

KRAKOOM

HO--- HO--- HO---

WE'LL BE THERE AS FAST AS WE CAN.

AWW, NO, HE'S GETTING FRIENDLY WITH *RUDOLPH.*

WELCOME BACK, STRANGER. IT'S BEEN AWHILE SINCE YOU POPPED IN.

YEAH, WELL SOMEONE TOLD ME THIS WAS GONNA BE A *GOOD TIME.*

YOU *DID* SOMETHING TO THIS.

I THOUGHT THE PARTY COULD USE A *KICK-START.*

JUST REMEMBER YOU'RE *DRINKIN' FOR TWO,* AND AT LEAST *ONE OF US* IS A MINOR, EVEN THOUGH THE OTHER *ACTS* LIKE IT.

OKAY, EVERYONE, TIME TO *DECORATE THE TREE!*

GREAT. SOMETHING TO DO!

THAT'S RIGHT. HE *INVADES* PEOPLE'S HOMES--THROUGH THEIR *CHIMNEYS!* AND YOU DON'T THINK THIS IS CAUSE FOR *ALARM?!*

OH... THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A GROUP THING, HUH?

YOU GUYS... WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE *HAVING FUN* TOGETHER AND EVERYONE'S ACTING LIKE IT'S SOME KIND OF *CHORE.* WHERE'S YOUR *HOLIDAY SPIRIT?*

RIGHT HERE, VIXIE PIXIE!

LET THE PARTY BEGIN!

WOAH! HOLD ON! HE'S OKAY! HONEST. SHAGGY'S GOT ENOUGH *TRANQUILIZERS* IN HIM TO KNOCK OUT *CINCINNATI.* IT'S LIKE *MONSTER RITALIN.* HE'S PERFECTLY HARMLESS.

MUNCHIES!

THAT'S DINAH'S FRUITCAKE.

GOBBLE, CRUNCH, GOBBLE

BETTER HIM THAN ME.

WE WERE GONNA DROP HIM OFF AT S.T.A.R. LABS, BUT THEY WERE HAVING *AN OFFICE PARTY.*

SO YOU BRING HIM TO *OURS?* HE'S A *MANIAC!* A *BEAST!*

AND HE'S *SHEDDING,* TOO. *=Ra-choo!=*

I DUNNO, MARI. HE SEEMS KINDA HUMAN TO ME.

MAYBE WE'RE WRONG ABOUT SHAGGYMAN. MAYBE HE'S NOT JUST A *SYNTHETIC CREATION* FROM LEXCORPS LABS. MAYBE UNDERNEATH ALL THAT HAIR IS JUST A *SIMPLE, MISUNDERSTOOD GUY.*

GLUG- GLUG- GLUG-

UH, OH.

"SI-I-LENT NIGHT, HO-O-LY NIGHT..."

WHAT IS STRANGE SAD SOUND?

THE SHAGMAN'S RIGHT. TIME FOR SOMETHING WITH A *BEAT.*

BOOM BA-BA-BA BOOM BA-BA BOOM BA-

BA-BA- BOOM BA-BA- BOOM BA-BA BOOM BA

OKAY, EVERYONE, IT'S TIME FOR *SECRET SANTA GIFTS!*

AND SHAGGYMAN HAS BROUGHT NOTHING...

AND THIS ONE'S FOR YOU, BLACK LIGHTNING. FROM BLACK CANARY.

LINT BRUSHES! GREAT!

YOU'RE *ALWAYS* ASKING IF I HAVE ONE.

SHAGGYMAN FEELS FUNNY.

TO BATMAN...FROM HAWKGIRL.

A TIE?

YOU ALREADY *HAD* A NUCLEAR DEFABROPHIBULATOR.

WHERE *IS* SHAGGYMAN?

TO PLATINA, FROM HELEN.

THANK YOU, HELEN. UH...WHAT IS "TURTLE WAX"?

REMEMBER WHEN YOU TALKED ABOUT GETTING A FACIAL?

SHAGGYMAN KNOWS. SHAGGYMAN WITH ENEMIES!

HERE, SUPERMAN. FROM PLASTIC MAN.

REMEMBER THAT TIME RED K TURNED YOU INTO THE FATTEST MAN ON EARTH? I HAD IT *FRAMED!*

THANKS, PLAS. THANKS A LOT.

MUST KILL AS MANY AS SHAGGYMAN CAN.

SHAGGYMAN STRIKES NOW! CATCH ENEMIES BY SURP...!

AND HERE'S *YOURS*, SHAGGYMAN.

GO AHEAD. OPEN IT. IT'S FROM ALL OF US.

HOW *ADORABLE.* IT EVEN LOOKS LIKE HIM.

THE SHAG LOOKS A LITTLE CHOKED UP. HEY, *FIRE-HEAD,* I THINK HE COULD USE SOME OF THAT PARTY PUNCH O' YOURS.

MAYBE SHAGGYMAN CAN RETURN FOR STORE CREDIT.

"...FOR AULD LANG SYNE, MY DEAR, FOR AULD LANG SYNE..."

"WE'LL TAKE A CUP OF *KINDNESS* YET..."

"...FOR AULD LANG SYNE."

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

party animal

Writer: ALAN BURNETT Artist: KEVIN MAGUIRE Colors: FRANK MARTIN Letterer: TRAVIS LANHAM

METROPOLIS.

DECEMBER 24TH, CHRISTMAS EVE.

MY NAME'S KIMIYO HOSHI...

...AND I HAVE A PROBLEM.

I'M A WORKAHOLIC.

IT'S CHRISTMAS EVE AND HERE I AM.

S.T.A.R.

I'M IN S.T.A.R. LABS WORKING WHEN I SHOULD BE HOME WITH MY KIDS. BUT TODAY'S THE BEST DAY TO WORK--NO ONE TO BOTHER ME.

I HAVE ACCESS TO INCREDIBLE TECHNOLOGIES AND **WONDERS** THE MIND COULD NEVER HOPE TO COMPREHEND.

BEING PRESIDENT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN A **DREAM** COME TRUE.

PLUS IT ALLOWS ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIMENT WITH MY SPECIAL ABILITIES.

YOU SEE...I HAVE POWERS. I'M A SUPERHERO. THE NAME'S--

WAIT. SOMETHING'S OFF.

WHAT--

STAR LABS

I CAN FEEL THE LIGHT AROUND ME--IT'S A SIXTH SENSE.

IT GIVES ME THE ABILITY TO KNOW WHEN SOMEONE'S WALKING INTO A ROOM.

NANTEKOTO!

MAMMOTH SMASH!

KRAKKASSHHH

OR WHEN A DAMN CHRISTMAS TREE IS THROWN AT ME FROM BEHIND.

G'DAY, DOCTOR!

KUSSSH KUSSSH

SHUT UP, MAMMOTH!

SORRY FOR MY BLOODY BROTHER. HE'S GOT A FEW KANGAROOS LOOSE IN THE TOP PADDOCK.

SHIMMER, YOU TOLD ME WE DIDN'T HAVE TO SEE THE DOCTOR AGAIN.

YOU KNOW I *HATE* DOCTORS BECAUSE THEY USED TO *TORTURE* ME BACK IN--

THESE TWO BLUBBERING IDIOTS ARE **MAMMOTH** AND **SHIMMER**--THE LAST TWO SURVIVING MEMBERS OF THE ORIGINAL FEARSOME FIVE. TWO SIBLING AUSSIES THAT ARE B-LIST VILLAINS AT BEST.

AS I WAS SAYING, WE'VE COME TO GIVE OUR LATE MATE, ***ARTHUR LIGHT***, A FINAL CHRISTMAS PRESENT. THAT PRESENT IS--

YOUR DEATH!

DON'T INTERRUPT ME, DIPSTICK.

ARTHUR LIGHT WAS THEIR TEAMMATE AND THE VILEST OF THE BUNCH.

I'VE FOUGHT HIM A FEW TIMES OVER THE YEARS.

I DON'T HAVE *TIME* FOR *YOU*.

HE EVEN **STOLE** MY POWERS ONCE. THEY ARE SIMILAR AFTER ALL.

GET OUT OF MY OFFICE!

PLUS WE SHARED THE *SAME NAME*...

DOCTOR LIGHT.

I KEEP MY COSTUME CLOSE TO ME AT ALL TIMES. NOT HAVING A SECRET IDENTITY MAKES YOU TAKE PRECAUTIONS. THAT'S HOW I KNOW MY KIDS ARE SAFE NOW.

I MARRIED YOUNG, AS MOST TRADITIONAL JAPANESE DO, AND HAD TWO WONDERFUL CHILDREN, AN OLDER DAUGHTER NAMED IMAKO AND A BOY NAMED YASU.

I DID AWAY WITH TRADITION AND DIVORCED MY HUSBAND FOR REASONS I WON'T DISCUSS AT THE MOMENT. NOW I'M A SINGLE MOTHER SUPERHERO, WHICH MY KIDS LOVE. THEY THINK IT'S "COOL."

I RECEIVED MY POWERS DURING A **CRISIS** WHEN A TREMENDOUS BEAM OF LIGHT STRUCK ME FROM THE STAR VEGA.

MY LATE FATHER--GOD REST HIS SOUL--GAVE ME A LIGHT-BASED COSTUME THAT HELPED ME CONTROL MY POWERS. HE HAD DEVELOPED IT WITH A SCIENTIST IN THE UNITED STATES NAMED DR. JACOB FINLAY.

BUT THAT MAN WAS MURDERED. MURDERED BY ARTHUR LIGHT, WHO STOLE THE LIGHT BASED TECHNOLOGY FOR HIMSELF.

ARTHUR AND I BATTLED A FEW TIMES OVER THE YEARS, CULMINATING WITH HIS FORCIBLY ABSORBING MY ENERGY--LEAVING ME POWERLESS.

BUT HE'S **DEAD** NOW. DESTROYED BY **THE SPECTRE.**

AND MY POWERS HAVE **RETURNED... STRONGER** THAN EVER.

UPON WITNESSING THE **SACRIFICE** OF MANY HEROES DURING THE **CRISIS**, I WAS **INSPIRED** TO MAINTAIN THE MANTLE OF **DOCTOR LIGHT** AND DEVOTE MY LIFE NOT JUST TO **SCIENCE**, BUT ALSO TO PROTECTING THE **INNOCENT.**

THEY SHOWED ME WHAT **LEGENDS** ARE MADE OF.

UNCERTAINTY AROSE AS I WAS UNSURE WHY I WAS BLESSED WITH SUCH GODLY GIFTS... HOWEVER I LEARNED TO MAKE THE BEST OF MY ABILITIES...

...AND I SOON JOINED THE **JUSTICE LEAGUE.**

SO NOW IT'S TIME TO TAKE DOWN...

...HIS OLD TEAMMATES.

DON'T THINK WE WEREN'T PREPARED FOR YOU.

MAMMOTH'S BLESSED WITH SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH, STAMINA AND DURABILITY. HE'S ALSO CURSED WITH AN UNDERDEVELOPED CEREBRUM, LEAVING HIM CRAVING A MOTHER FIGURE-- HIS SISTER.

TOSS ME, MAMMOTH.

SURE THING, SIS. BUT WHERE?

AT HER, YOU BLOODY DRONGO.

SHIMMER'S POWER IS THE ABILITY TO TRANSMUTE ANY ELEMENT OR COMPOUND INTO ANOTHER.

SINCE WE RETURNED FROM THAT DAMN PRISON PLANET, WE--WELL, I'VE BEEN PLOTTING HOW TO DESTROY YOUR SHONKY GOVERNMENT. YOU'RE JUST A MINOR INCONVENIENCE ALONG THE WAY.

I CAN JUST PUT UP A LIGHT SHIELD. NOTHING CAN STOP LIGHT. WHAT IS SHE HOPING TO--

CRAP!

I JUST TRANSMUTED YOUR SHIELD INTO A MIRROR.

I'M NOT AS DUMB AS YOU THINK. RATHER I'D SAY I'M QUITE THE CAT'S MEOW.

IF I USE MY POWERS, THE LIGHT WILL JUST REFLECT OFF THE MIRROR AND HIT ME.

MY ONLY OPTION'S TO WAIT IN HERE UNTIL HER POWER WEARS OFF.

I'M TRAPPED.

Y'KNOW HOW MUCH ARTHUR HATED YOU FOR WEARING HIS COSTUME? USING HIS NAME?

SHUT IT! I'M TIRED OF YOUR EARBASHING.

G'BYE, DOCTOR LADY.

IT WASN'T HIS COSTUME. IT WAS DR FINLAY'S AND MY FATHER'S, RAIDEN TAZU.

WHERE'S HE THROWING--

OH NO!

THE METROPOLIS POWER PLANT!

BOOOM

METROPOLIS POWER PLANT

THE CITY!

MY TRANSMUTED SHIELD'S BROKEN. I'M FREE, BUT...

...THE ELECTRICITY'S OUT.

THE DARKNESS...

...IT'S OVERWHELMING.

I'M GONNA *CREAM* HER GOOD.

GET UP, FOR GOD'S SAKE-- GET UP!

YOU HAVE THE POWER. CLOSE YOUR EYES--

I HEAR THEM. THEY'RE COMING FOR ME. DON'T LET THE NYCTOPHOBIA IN.

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN AFRAID OF THE DARK. I STILL SLEEP WITH A NIGHT LIGHT; B-BUT I HAVE TO GET UP.

THERE'S NO DARKNESS.

THERE'S NO DARKNESS. NOW OPEN WITH...

...INFRARED.

SELINDA, I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING.

I RECKON YOU'RE MIGHTY *SCARED* NOW. NO LIGHT TO MANIPULATE.

SHE'S NOT AS SMART AS SHE THOUGHT.

WHO SAID I CAN *ONLY* MANIPULATE LIGHT? I CAN ALSO *STORE* IT.

NO!

I'M PISSED. I'VE ALWAYS HAD A SHORT TEMPER AND NO PATIENCE.

LIGHTS OUT!

SELINDA!

IF YOU'VE HURT HER, I'LL--

HER? YOU SHOULD WORRY ABOUT YOURSELF.

I COULD DESTROY YOUR CORNEAS. YOU'D NEVER SEE AGAIN.

SELINDA! I CAN'T SEE, SELINDA.

SAVE ME!

I ENJOY HIS FEARS, BUT...

...I'M NOT THAT KIND OF GIRL. HE'LL ONLY BE SEEING STARS FOR A WEEK.

AAAAAH!

LOOK AT THIS MESS. IT WOULD TAKE DAYS TO FIX AND GET ELECTRICITY BACK TO THE CITY.

THOUSANDS OF FAMILIES WOULD BE DISAPPOINTED WITH NO CHRISTMAS LIGHTS. I'D BE RUINING CHRISTMAS.

AND WHAT ABOUT CHANUKAH? IT'S THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS--THE ENTIRE HOLIDAY IS BASED ON THE MIRACLE OF LIGHT BURNING FOR DAYS LONGER THAN EXPECTED.

IT'S UP TO ME. METROPOLIS NEEDS LIGHT **NOW**. I **HAVE** TO SAVE THE HOLIDAYS.

LET THERE BE LIGHT!

I KNEW A DAY LIKE THIS WOULD COME.

PEOPLE ALWAYS WONDER WHY I TOOK THE NAME AND WEAR THE SAME COSTUME OF SUCH AN EVIL BASTARD. OTHER HEROES HAVE TRIED TO CONVINCE ME TO CHANGE, BUT I WON'T GIVE IN.

COULD BE 'CAUSE I'M STUBBORN, BUT I KNOW I'M RIGHT.

THE NAME DOCTOR LIGHT SHOULD BE--**WILL BE** ASSOCIATED WITH **HOPE**, NOT EVIL.

IT'S TIME TO REALLY STEP UP MY TIME AS DOCTOR LIGHT TO SHOW THE WORLD-- PROVE TO THEM THAT LIGHT--**LIGHT IS...**

POLICE

...BEAUTIFUL.

LET THERE BE LIGHT!

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FOLLOW DOCTOR LIGHT IN JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA

This season, REMEMBER to show ALL your friends how SPECIAL the WORLD is!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

--from all your friends at DC COMICS

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